JUNE 12TH AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

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JULY 12 and DISARMAMENT

The Second Special Session on Disarmament (SSD II) of the U.N. General Assembly will open in New York in early June. What will happen there?

The 150-plus member states will send leading representatives to SSD II. Most will make proposals on stopping the arms race, for most of the world's governments and all of the world's peoples, are supporters of disarmament, supporters of peace, understanding and cooperation. In addition, many important non-government organizations will speak at SSD II. The World Federation of of Democratic Youth, to which the YWLL is affiliated will be one of these.

What is the athmosphere, the context, for SSD II? In what conditions will it take place?

It will take place in the midst of the fastest-growing and most representative peace movement ever witnessed in the world and in our country. It will occur at a point when hundreds of millions of people the world over, and here at home have called for a nuclear freeze, for negotiations, despite the Reagan-Haig advocacy of limited nuclear war, first-strike and military superiority.

And parallel to SSD II, as a symbol and reflection of out people's support of the Special Session on Disarmament, the largest peace actions of our time will be held: The June 6 rally in Los Angeles, and the June 12 marches in San Francisco and New York. In all likelihood, these will draw a million people; a turnout that large in the number one imperialist country, the land whose leaders promote the arms race and defy science and reason by so doing, the nation where Anti-Sovietism guides every new weapon and every budget cut- such a turnout will be a sign of something really new and significant in the lives and struggles of youth and students in the U.S.A. The struggle for disarmament is emerging, and is more clearly viewed by the participants, as the fight for life over death.

Who started the arms race? Who is threatening whom?

The first nuclear, or atomic weapons were developed by the U.S in the early 1940's, and dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, with genocidal results that persist to this day. The Soviet Union has always responded to U.S. development of new weapons, but has never initiated new types of weapons. The Soviet Union, in ruins after World War II, always had to catch up to the U.S. military strength U.S leaders always publicly announced their goals, even as the U.S.S.R. buried its victims of Nazi aggression: military superiority over the Soviet Union.

Thus, the U.S.S.R. developed its atomic bomb as a defensive measure in the late 1940's, and so on.

U.S.A	NUCLEAR WEAPONS	U.S.S.R
mid-1940's (used 1945)		late 1940's
	Intercontinental Strategic Bombers	
mid-1950's		late 1950's
	Nuclear-Powered Submarines	
mid 1950's		late 1950's
	Nuclear Powered Aircraft Carriers	
early 1960's		none
	Neutron Bomb	
late 1970's		none

(based on Where the Threat to Peace, U.S.S.R. Ministry of Defense, 1982 Moscow)

The Reagan-Haig-Weinberger tall tale of Soviet military superiority is based on the big lie of the Soviet threat. It is just that: a lie, a fabrication geared towards justifying a U.S. military build-up. The real relationship between U.S. and Soviet strength is described as "parity", a general equivalance, by leading U.S. military experts.

Former Defense Secreary Harold Brown declared on April 25, 1979: "We have reached a point which the United States and the Soviet Union have rough parity in strategic capability, and in conventional capability. We and our allies are probably in rough parity with the Soviet Union and its allies."

The 1982 Defense Department report says: "...while the era of U.S. superiority is long past, parity- not U.S. inferiority - has replaced it..." Speaking on French TV, February 23, 1981, Alexander Haig said the same thing.

Here are some facts about the arms race:

A- Nato forces outnumber those of the Warsaw Pact and Nato outspends the Warsaw Pact in defense expenditures.
(Center for Defense Information, Defense Monthly, June 1980; Defense Department Annual Report Fiscal Year 1982)

B- The U.S. holds a significant lead in the number of deliverable nuclear warheads by 9500 to 7000 over the U.S.S.R. Experts say the number of warheads is a key measure of military power.
(Council on Economic Priorities, Costs and Consequences of Reagan's Military Buildup, 1982, pg.39)

C- NATO's naval stregth is greater than that of the Warsaw Pact, by 400 surface combatants to 235.
(Defense Monitor, June 1980)

D- General David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, admitted: "There is too much pessimism about our current capability. I would not swap our present military capability with that of the Soviet Union..." (Defense Monitor, June 1980)

Why then do we have so much about Soviet superiority? Why do Haig and Reagan say a nuclear freeze will only leave the U.S.S.R. ahead of the U.S.A.? Why do we hear so much about the threat from the Soviet Union when it is clear that no threat exists or has ever existed?

Again, it is based on the lie of the Soviet "menace" which has been the rationale for every move of U.S. imperialism since World War II. It follows from Anti-Sovietism and Anti-Communism, from monopoly's hatred of socialism, national liberation and working class struggle, from its fear of losing its "rights" and "freedom" to make profits. There is no Soviet threat. Anti-Sovietism is that full-fledged, well-thought out, false ideology taught in schools from day one, which attributes every progressive movement to Soviet "intrigue", which identifies the true security of our youth and people with the Pentagon and Big Bussiness. Anti-Sovietism, the Big Lie, found its best expression in Hitler, world's foremost anti-Communist, who combatted the "Soviet Menace" through genocidal murder. Socialism threatens no one. It represents life. Lenin wrote: "Disarmament is the ideal of socialism." (Collected Works,Vol.23, pg. 95)

But there are new elements to this lie. First, it is now repeated to camouflage policies designated to turn back the gains of the peoples' world-wide. Second, more people, including more Americans, than ever before are becoming aware that the myth of the Soviet threat is in fact a lie. This is part of the new context in which the June 12 action and SSD II will be held.

What are the key concepts of the foreign policy of the Reagan Administration? Is nuclear war winnable?

They are the concepts of first-strike, limited nuclear war and military superiority. They are implemented through a military build-up. First strike is the first use of nuclear weapons. The U.S.S.R. has stated its willingness to pledge it will never be the first to use nuclear weapons. Alexander Haig defended the use of first-strike as recently as April 6. He said the U.S. should retain this "option" to give it more "flexibility".

Limited nuclear warfare advocates small dosages of nuclear weapons in various world hot-spots. The Administration claims this will settle disputes when no other way will do. A Pentagon spokesman stated this literally in Newsweek April 26, 1982.

But scientists and doctors have proven that nuclear war's effects on civilization will be permanent. Civilization as we know it will cease. Period.

What is the peace movement today?

In the U.S.A. and elsewhere, it is the broadest it has been. Clergymen, youth and student groups, Black and Latino organizations, trade unions, senior citizens associations and women's groups make up the new peace upsurge in the U.S.A. Over 300 town meetings and city councils, the U.S. Catholic Bishops

Conference, key state legislatures, prominent former foreign policy-makers all have come out for a nuclear freeze. This has never happened before.

The June 12 rallies have the widest sponsorship. Importantly, they call not only for a freeze and reduction in arms, but also for a transfer of funds to meet the needs of our people and youth in jobs, housing, education, health care and recreation. This is an important new dimension in the peace movement.

The movement for a freeze and for June 12 shows that most Americans do not believe Reagan. Over 89% told Newsweek (April 26, 1982) poll that a "limited nuclear war" was unfeasable.

What is the role of the YWLL in the June 12 rallies and in the peace movement generally?

This movement involves millions of youth and students. To them the YWLL brings its experiences and understanding of:

A. The need for multinational, multiracial youth unity.

B. The link of youth's economic concerns and the need to connect the demand for peace with the call for jobs and education.

The YWLL, because of its ideology, its belief in unity, its understanding, can bring its knowledge of anti-Sovietism to youth and students in the peace movement:

A.The threat to peace comes from Reagan who represents Big Monopoly.
B. Reagan's main device is anti-Sovietism.
C. The U.S.S.R. has made numerous peace proposals to which the U.S. government should respond.

The YWLL, with its working-class outlook can add consistency, to help gu guarantee that June 12 is not a one-shot deal.
The YWLL's contribution can enhance the youth movement's view of the peace struggle, can help to clarify the questions.
Above all we can help make sure that the class and national composition of the youth contingent in the peace movement is enhanced.
And we can show that youth's electoral power must be wielded in 1982, and 1984 to kick Reagan out of the White House.

The YWLL can point out that the money spent on:

1 F-14	fighter could be used to build	9 schools
1 B-1 bomber	" " " "	16 hospitals
1 aircraft carrier	" " "	1 hydroelectric plant or 90,000 apartments
1 tank battalion exercise	" "	28 daycare centers
1 Trident Sub	" "	416 schools
	" " "	5 hospitals

What kind of activities can League Sections and branches do during the pre-June 12 period and after?

The League has proposed a project: "Make the young generation a nuc-lear-free zone!" With petitions, resolutions, telegrams, buttons, artwork,

sports events, films, etc. We can circulate the message where we live, work, go to school, meet, play ball and so forth. It can involve thousands of students and youth, and is fully in the spirit of the nuclear freeze, nuclear-free zone movement in parts of Europe. Branches should issue their own leaflets and initiate meetings, press conferences and forums, joining with every youth and student force. June 12 involves nearly everyone, therefore the League-initiated nuclear-freee zone project can appeal to every youth and student.

Discussion Questions

1. What organizations in your community or in your school have taken a stand on the arms race? Youth organizations?

2. Is there a peace sentiment, a peace majority in your area? How is it reflected?

3. Do you confront anti-Sovietism in your work? How do you answer it?

4. What type of initiatives covering the whole spectrum of youth's interests and activities could your branh take?

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